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ELEGIAC TRIBUTE

TO THE

MEMORY

OF

The Rev. *John Fletcher*,

LATE

Vicar of MADELEY, *Shropshire.*

Who died SUNDAY, AUGUST 14th, 1785, in the Fifty Sixth Year of his Age.

Ανδρα τελην πιστεως και πνευματος αγιε.

Bleſſed are the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the SPIRIT, that they may reſt from their labors; and their works do follow them. REV. xiv. 13.

By E. THOMAS, ASTRONOMER.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Rev. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

THE FOLLOWING

ELEGIAC POEM,

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS

Moſt obedient and humble SERVANT,

The AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE much-lamented Death of that eminently pious and learned Miniſter of the Goſpel, the late Rev. Mr. FLETCHER, having ſpread an univerſal Gloom in that Part of God's Vineyard where he had, for many Years laboured with great Succeſs, I thought it a Duty incumbent upon me, to improve the ſolemn Call, by publiſhing this *Humble poetical Tribute*, to the Memory of ſo great a Divine.

To delineate the true Character of this learned, yet humble Servant of JESUS CHRIST, muſt be a Taſk for an abler Pen. I ſhall therefore only add, as an Apology for publiſhing the following elegiac Lines, the Account given of this great Man, in the *Shrewſbury Chronicle*, of *Saturday* the 20*th* of *Auguſt*, 1785, *viz.*

"On the 14th Inſtant departed this Life, the Rev. JOHN FLETCHER, Vicar of *Madeley*, in this County, to the inexpreſſible Grief and Concern of his Pariſhioners, and of all who had the Happineſs of knowing him. If we ſpeak of him as a Man and a Gentleman, he was poſſeſſed of every Virtue and every Accompliſhment which dignifies Human Nature.---If we attempt to ſpeak of him as a Miniſter

of the Goſpel, it will be extremely difficult to give the World a juſt Idea of this great Character. His deep Learning, his exalted Piety, his never-ceaſing Labors to diſcharge the important Duties of his Function, together with the Abilities and good Effect with which he diſcharged thoſe Duties, are beſt known, and will never be forgotten in that Vineyard in which he labored. His Charity, his univerſal Benevolence, his Meekneſs, and exemplary Goodneſs, are ſcarcely equalled amongſt the Sons of Men. Anxious to the laſt Moment of his Life to diſcharge the ſacred Duties of his Office, he performed the Service of the Church, and Adminiſtered the holy Sacrament to upwards of two Hundred Communicants the *Sunday* preceding his Death, confiding in that Almighty Power which had given him Life, and reſigning that Life into the Hands of him who gave it, with that compoſure of Mind, and thoſe joyful Hopes of a joyful Reſurrection, which ever accompany the laſt Moments of the Juſt."

Mr. *Fletcher* was a Native of *Nyon*, in *Switzerland*, and was preſented to the Vicarage of *Madeley* in 1760.

Shrewſbury, *Auguſt* 30, 1785.

AN

ELEGIAC TRIBUTE, &c.

O THOU, to whom eternal Life belongs,
To whoſe bleſt Name the ſeraphs tune their ſongs,
THOU, whoſe dread FIAT, caus'd the world to be,
Hung out the lamps of heav'n, and form'd the ſea!
THOU Great JEHOVAH! whoſe unerring Hand
Deals righteous judgments on a ſinful land!
THOU, who doſt give—and THOU, who tak'ſt away,
Pour on our *Hearts* thy *Soul reviving Ray!*
For gloomy miſts ſurround *Sabrina*'s tide,
And *Madeley-Wood* laments on ev'ry ſide;
No tender breaſt, but heaves the melting ſigh,
While briny tears flow gently from the eye.

"Our

"Our loſs is great—Our *Paſtor* and our *Prieſt*,
FLETCHER, is *gone*—*to God's eternal Reſt!*
No more we hear the accents of his tongue,
That *Boanerges* which awak'd the throng—
The ſleeping throng—in treſpaſſes and ſin,
He made to tremble at their *guilt within*;
He never broke the *feeble*, *bruiſed reed*,
But prov'd a *true Samaritan* indeed."

His Maſter's ſheep he fed in paſtures green,
Where cryſtal ſtreams and cooling ſhades are ſeen,
With wholeſome milk he rear'd the tender lambs,
He watch'd their ſtrayings, and he knew their names;
To each his proper portion he would deal,
The dark enlighten, and the wounded heal;
To living waters he would guide his flock,
And FOLD them in the *Side* of CHRIST the *Rock*—
The Rock of Ages—where a *ſafe retreat*,
Is always found from *ev'ry ſtorm* or *heat*:

His

His *doctrine pointed, practical,* and *good,*
Directing *ſinners* to the SAVIOUR's BLOOD.

Nor was his paſt'ral vigilance confin'd
To narrow bounds—His *evangelic Mind*
From ſea to ſea fought out the *wand'ring ſheep,*
O'er lofty hills, and in the valleys deep:
'Mong rav'nous wolves, undaunted he declar'd
His Maſter's meſſage—nor their fury fear'd;
Uncommon bleſſings efficac'd the Word,
And prov'd the Servant *guided by his* LORD.

His *Charity* extended wide and far,
No ſect or party could eſcape his care;
His Life, the truth of ev'ry precept prov'd,
And univerſal was his name belov'd.

When hoary *Time,* brought on his rapid wing
The *dart of Death—without the venom'd ſting,*

Lo, FLETCHER ſmil'd!—nor wiſh'd the leaſt delay,
But call'd his Flock the next *Sabbattic Day*
To JESU's Table—There a *ſweet Repaſt*
With them he took—perceiving 'twas *his laſt*,
He mildly ſaid, "This Sacrament receive;
"It is the laſt that ever I ſhall give!
"But CHRIST is with you—He will be your Guide,
"For *you* He liveth—and for *you* He dy'd!
"I'm going home—May GOD be with you all,
"And make you ready for the Bridegroom's call;
"That I may meet you in the realms above,
"Where flow the ſtreams of everlaſting love!"

Thus ſpake the *Paſtor*—Strait a ſilent tear
Dropt from each eye—For lo! the day was near,
When borne triumphant on angelic wings,
He met the heralds of the King of kings,
Whoſe ſalutations—"Come, thou faithful, bleſt,
"Enjoy thy crown, and from thy labors reſt,"

Spread wide the gates of heav'nly Paradiſe,
The realms of bliſs above the vaulted ſkies!
Where with the Church-triumphant now he reigns,
In concert joining their melodious ſtrains,
Of grateful ſongs to JESUS and the LAMB,
The *Firſt*, the *Laſt*, the *Mighty*, *Great* I AM!

Adieu, dear Friend!—enjoy thy bleſt abode,
And glorious preſence of thy Saviour GOD;
We too, like Thee, ſhall quit this mortal clay,
And truſt, be launched to the realms of day!
But, Oh, the Relict, which of Thee remains!
Who can expreſs *her* ſorrows and *her* pains?
Thy Chriſtian Partner, and thy loving Bride—
Her tears muſt flow, as murm'ring rivers glide.
But yet, a little while, thoſe tears ſhall ceaſe,
And, *with her* FLETCHER, *ſhe will be at eaſe.*

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F I N I S.